

March 26, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Data Quality Bonus System

You may have heard some talk about the revamping of the data quality bonus system. Those of you who have been with the Observer Program for a couple years know that we implemented it with our new contract back in 2002. Our goal was to provide a reward for outstanding data collection and observer performance.

As you can imagine with a system like this, bugs need to be worked out before everything runs smoothly and effectively. Members of my staff, together with staff from AIS, have been working hard to develop a system which is both fair to you and accomplishes the intent of a quality-based bonus. They've done extensive research and calculations and come up with a system that will reward you for doing a good job.

The bulk of the bonus will still be based on the quality of the data, using the same Evaluation Form as before, with a specific set of rating factors, as you'll see. In addition, a few other factors have been plugged into the evaluation equation. We feel these particular factors have a direct relation to the overall, multifaceted observer job.

One of these is a requirement to accomplish a minimum number of sea days. We're going to have a considerable increase in the number of sea days on the schedule. We hope that a team spirit will prevail with all of us. With this in mind, we're using an average of 12 sea days per month as a requirement to be considered for a bonus with full time employees. Part time observers will need to average 6 sea days per month. These numbers will easily allow you to take vacations and participate in activities without jeopardizing your qualification to be considered for a bonus.

The data quality will count for 70% of the bonus score and 10% of the equation will cover getting the data in on time and calling in OBSCON on time. We've added a category of Field Performance, which will be 10% of the overall score. This will include maintaining a randomness of vessel selection and the results of the captain's interviews, conducted by the Area Coordinators. We'll use a very brief monthly report where you can provide any valid reasons for repeat trips on a particular vessel, e.g., there were only 2 vessels operating in your port.

There will be 10% allocated to the area of Communications. This includes interactions with Editors, NMFS staff as well as AIS staff.

There will now be two monetary levels of bonus. Overall scores between 90-100 will receive 100% of the bonus value for each sea day done during the evaluation period. Scoring between 85-89 will receive 50% of the bonus value for each sea day.

The evaluation period will run from 1 April through 31 March. There will be a mid-year evaluation in September where interaction between you and the evaluation team (or a representative of the team) will provide an exchange of feedback. This mid-year evaluation is modeled after the system in place for our Government employees. It's a useful tool for all of us.

Final evaluations will be done after the completion of activity in March and bonus calculations will be done and monetary awards will be made as soon as possible.

If you have been one of the many observers who have missed earning a bonus on a trip now and then, I think you'll find this new system to be to your advantage. Rather than not receiving a bonus for a particular trip, that trip will be averaged into the total calculation for the year. Overall high quality data collection and dedicated performance are what we should all be striving for and what we want to reward with this system.

Enclosed, there's a summary of the revisions to the Data Quality Bonus system, a copy of the revised Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet and the new mid-year and final evaluation sheet.

We hope to be awarding a lot of bonuses. Thanks for all your hard work.

Attachments:

Summary of Revisions

Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet (Trip Level)

Mid-Year and Final Review Sheet

An example of what a Mid-Year/Final Review sheet will contain

Summary of Revisions:

- In order to be eligible to be considered to receive a Quality Data Bonus, full time observers must average 10 sea days per month. Part time observers must average 5 sea days per month.
- Bonuses will be awarded annually. There will be a mid year review, as we use in the Government, where accomplishments are discussed and feedback exchanged. The Evaluation Period will begin 1 April and mid year evaluations will be done in Sept-Oct. Final evaluations will be done after 31 March.
- Data quality and receipt of the data and OBSCON on time will count for 80% of the scoring. Data must arrive at Woods Hole within 7 calendar days and OBSCON must be called in as soon as the trip is completed. Field performance will count for 10%. This will be based on randomness of vessel selection (using very brief monthly reports to explain any justifiable reasons for repeat deployments on vessels. Jo and her staff will provide guidance regarding how to submit this report.) Also, in this category, we'll use the vessel interview system we've had in place for a couple years, with the Area Coordinator's interviews of your captains.
- Communications with NMFS and AIS will count for 10% of the overall score. This will include overall positive attitude, maintaining contact, keeping staff apprized of periods of absence and returning calls when on land.
- Field #5 on the Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet has the scoring criteria cutoff is now set at 0.5 incorrect fields per sea day. (Our extensive calculations show that observers who are now consistently receiving bonuses and providing high quality data, would be scoring 0.2 - 0.5 under the new system in this field.)
- Fields #7-8 on the Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet have the scoring criteria cutoff is now set at 0.3 fields per page. (Our calculations are showing 0.2 - 0.3 is the average for our observers currently producing quality data.)
- There will now be two monetary levels of bonus. Overall scores between 90-100 will receive 100% of the bonus value for each sea day done during the evaluation period. Scoring between 85-89 will receive 50% of the bonus value for each sea day.

Summary of Revisions:

- In order to be eligible to be considered to receive a Quality Data Bonus, full time observers must average 10 sea days per month. Part time observers must average 5 sea days per month.
- Bonuses will be awarded annually. There will be a mid year review, as we use in the Government, where accomplishments are discussed and feedback exchanged. The Evaluation Period will begin 1 April and mid year evaluations will be done in Sept-Oct. Final evaluations will be done after 31 March.
- Data quality and receipt of the data and OBSCON on time will count for 80% of the scoring. Data must arrive at Woods Hole within 7 calendar days and OBSCON must be called in as soon as the trip is completed. Field performance will count for 10%. This will be based on randomness of vessel selection (using very brief monthly reports to explain any justifiable reasons for repeat deployments on vessels. Jo and her staff will provide guidance regarding how to submit this report.) Also, in this category, we'll use the vessel interview system we've had in place for a couple years, with the Area Coordinator's interviews of your captains.
- Communications with NMFS and AIS will count for 10% of the overall score. This will include overall positive attitude, maintaining contact, keeping staff apprized of periods of absence and returning calls when on land.
- Field #5 on the Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet has the scoring criteria cutoff is now set at 0.5 incorrect fields per sea day. (Our extensive calculations show that observers who are now consistently receiving bonuses and providing high quality data, would be scoring 0.2 - 0.5 under the new system in this field.)
- Fields #7-8 on the Data Quality/OBSCON score sheet have the scoring criteria cutoff is now set at 0.3 fields per page. (Our calculations are showing 0.2 - 0.3 is the average for our observers currently producing quality data.)
- There will now be two monetary levels of bonus. Overall scores between 90-100 will receive 100% of the bonus value for each sea day done during the evaluation period. Scoring between 85-89 will receive 50% of the bonus value for each sea day.

DATA QUALITY/OBSCON

80%

Trip Identification _____ Date Landed _____ # Days _____

Pass?	yes	no
Obscon		
Data Quality		

OBSCON CRITERIA - 10%	NO	YES	EXPLANATION (Continue on back if needed)
1. Was Obscon and Obstak called in for this trip?			
2. Was the data received on time?			
DATA CRITERIA - 70%	NO	YES	EXPLANATION (Continue on back if needed)
1. Were the six-month questions asked, if required?			
2. Were all logs included and were all the appropriate logs used (including all required reporting logs)?			
3. Were hauls observed correctly, as required?			
4. Were the appropriate samples collected for fish, crustaceans, and shellfish (including weights, lengths, sex, samples, etc.)?			
5. Are the species on the haul log, length frequency log, and age structure samples all in accordance? Check NO if greater than 0.5 fields were wrong per sea day. # days_____# incorrect fields_____Avg per day_____			
6. Were the appropriate samples collected for incidental takes (minimum sampling requirements and biological samples)?			
7. Were all fields completed when required (and if not, was a comment included)? Check NO if greater than 0.3 fields were omitted per page. # pages_____# omitted fields_____ Avg per pg_____			
8. Were all fields recorded correctly and in the proper format (and if not, was a comment included)? Check NO if greater than 0.3 fields were wrong per page: # pages_____# incorrect fields_____ Avg per pg_____			
9. Were there other unacceptable or outstanding errors?			

OBSERVERNAME _____ ID _____

MID YEAR REVIEW Average # sea days/month _____

[illegible]

Field	

Comm _____

FINAL ANNUAL REVIEW

[illegible]

Field	

Comm _____

AVERAGE # SEA DAYS/MONTH

DATA QUALITY x .70

DATA & OBSCON IN ON TIME x .10

FIELD PERFORMANCE x .10

COMMUNICATIONS x .10

FINAL SCORE _____ x # sea days _____ \$ _____